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Jennifer Holl *

Abstract: »*Das Wunder seiner Zeit': Richard Tarlton und die Dynamik frühneuzeitlicher Theaterstars*«. Taking the early stage clown Richard Tarlton as a case study, this article offers a historical inquiry into the dynamics of theatrical celebrity in early modern London. Specifically, this article argues that in early modern England, the multivalent term *wonder* encapsulated the modern concept of celebrity and that Tarlton's assignation as "the wonder of his time" spoke not only to his own remarkable celebrity, but to a robust culture of celebrity emanating from the era's theaters. This discussion centers on three gradually expansive sites of wonder – the theater, print and spoken discourse, and market relations – that correspond to three crucial elements of celebrity culture: identification, dissemination, and commoditization. This essay argues that despite current trends in celebrity studies that locate the birth of celebrity in the 18th century, the dynamics of theatrical exchange, the theater's disseminating reach into other segments of the public, and the market relations of a proto-capitalist credit culture spurred an active trade in celebrity in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Keywords: Celebrity, Early Modern England, Richard Tarlton, theater, wonder.

1. Introduction: Celebrity and Wonder

In a pivotal confrontation in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, an exasperated King Henry beseeches his wayward son, the roguish Prince Hal, to consider the toll his highly public, drunken exploits have exacted upon his potential capacity to rule. "Had I so lavish of my presence been,/ So common-hackneyed in the eyes of men," the elder Henry admonishes his son, he claims he would never have ascended to the throne, but been relegated instead to "reputeless banishment,/ A fellow of no mark" (3.2.39-40, 44-5). The King then offers his own strategy of advancement as a prescriptive exemplar:

> By being seldom seen, I could not stir
> But, like a comet, I was wondered at,
> That men would tell their children 'This is he.'

* Jennifer Holl, Department of English, Rhode Island College, 600 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence, RI 02908, USA; jholl@ric.edu.

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Others would say 'Where, which is Bolingbroke?' ...
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,
My presence like a robe pontifical–
Ne'er seen but wondered at. (3.2.46-9, 55-7)

As is the case with many of Shakespeare's monarchs, the dynamics of kingship espoused here likely shed more light on the conventions of the 16th-century London theater in which such figures were revived than on the political history of the middle ages. Like Richard II's flowery verse or the explicit revelry Richard III takes in his wicked machinations, Henry IV's lengthy meditation on publicity seems a more fitting theatrical strategy than display of monarchical power, and one designed specifically to keep audiences coming back for more. As opposed to the institutions of honor, renown, and glory that celebrity historians like Fred Inglis and Antoine Lilti have argued most aptly characterize fame within both the monarchy and Shakespeare's early modern England, Henry's campaign all but ignores those systems' reliance on ritual, representation, and reciprocal duty to instead proclaim a singular kind of star power centered on "my person." To be a king, he claims, is to be "wondered at": a passive construction that privileges his public's active role in his sustained relevance, and one he deems so vital to his ascension that he emphatically asserts the phrase twice within ten lines. His strategy involves careful staging mitigated by premeditated scarcity in order to whet his public's desire, but never satiate it, as his primary objective is to cultivate a rapt audience, ever hungry for his presence. His audience, in turn, probes and clamors, not in due devotion to God and country, but in a shared spirit of curiosity that centers only on the man, Bolingbroke, and not the glory of his office. If the kind of public appeal Henry espouses belies the gravity of the 15th-century kingship, it is one that certainly befits the 16th-century player-king, as his chief aim is to instill in his audience an insatiable wonder that his scant presence can only flirt with fulfilling. He does not so much instruct his son how to be a king as he does how to become a celebrity of the stage.

In fact, it is precisely the kind of curiosity Henry describes – being perpetually "wondered at" by his public – that Lilti isolates as the core of the phenomenon of celebrity: "the source of celebrity is [...] the curiosity elicited among contemporaries by a singular personality" (Lilti 2017, 6), and a celebrity is judged not by his actions, but as Henry understands, by his "ability to capture and maintain curiosity" (Lilti 2017, 6; see also the interview with Lilti and Le Goff in this issue: Lilti and Le Goff 2019, 19-38). To this end, Inglis cites a dialectic of "knowability and distance" that spurs the public's complex desires and maintains the curiosity for celebrities (Inglis 2010, 11) – a paradox that Henry similarly locates in the wonder achieved through his strategically limited accessibility. But both Lilti and Inglis, along with the preponderance of critical inquiry into the history of celebrity, have argued that these complex mechanisms of identification with famous individuals emerged only in the 18th centu-

ry, with Inglis specifically citing Elizabethan England as "a period before celebrity became a feature of the individualisation of fame" (Inglis 2010, 5). Instead, both Lilti and Inglis deem pre-18th-century forms of fame as bound in representation, with publics drawn in reverence to the ideals and institutions that individuals, like the king, may be thought to embody, but not to the individuals themselves. Such formulations, however, tend to rely on analyses of the fame of royalty and the highborn, while overlooking the competing, emergent dynamics of fame proliferating in and from the early modern theater.

In his comingling of statecraft with stagecraft, Henry theatricalizes what Leo Braudy has cited as a broader and highly significant cultural shift in thinking about public persons in the early modern era, and one that he specifically tied to the very stage upon which these instructions were first delivered. "In the history of fame," Braudy wrote in *The Frenzy of Renown*,

> the seventeenth century thus marks the increasing importance of theater not only for the self-presentation of public men but also for the way in which all individuals contemplate the nature of their rulers and themselves as social beings. (Braudy 1986, 319)

Due in large part, he has argued, to "the increasing importance of the actor as a cultural figure," notions of the individual, and even the term *individual* itself, with "the implication of a core of personal distinctiveness yet visible to the world" (Braudy 1986, 331, 343), emerged as topics of heightened contemplation and even celebration in early modern England. As Braudy has found, and Henry demonstrates, on the stage, old ideas about aristocratic power were regularly conflated with the emerging recognition of the individual magnetism of the performer, "as both character and star" (Braudy 1986, 333).

It is this new, emergent system of fame generated from the 16th-century stages of London playhouses – one rooted in curiosity rather than reverence, and centered on living individuals as opposed to storied institutions – that I believe Henry labels as *wonder* and, in many ways, *wonder* in the early modern era acts as one of the descriptors under which celebrity has travelled prior to the 19th-century appearance of the term as denoting famous persons. While exactly what defines the celebrity, and hence what separates this entity from related forms of fame, is rightfully contested in the diverse field of celebrity studies, much critical consensus centers on three key components of the phenomenon – namely, the public's identification with and expansive dissemination and commoditization of well known, contemporary individuals. However, even in the most generous surveys of the phenomenon's history, scholars have rather steadfastly extended the concept only as far back as the 18th century, even while comfortably acknowledging the existence of the idea of celebrity before the birth of the term to describe it. While holding to the notion, as Stella Tillyard has suggested, that "celebrity appears to have been made in the eighteenth century" (Tillyard 2005, 61), Inglis has argued that "celebrity, if not under that name, has been with us for 250 years" (Inglis 2010, 47). Lilti, too,

has isolated the invention of the celebrity in the 18th century, while acknowledging that much writing in the era focused on "*the topic of celebrity,*" including "all the characteristic developments of a discourse about celebrity" (Lilti 2017, 7, 85), if not the term *celebrity* in its modern, embodied sense. In a similar vein, I'd like to propose here that *wonder* provides one such term that likewise encapsulated "the topic of celebrity" in the 16th and 17th centuries, and that wonder was a concept and a term strongly linked to the theater and to its emergent celebrities.

Contemporary accounts certainly attested to the wonder generated by the era's famous players. "He charmes our attention," Sir Thomas Overbury wrote in 1614 of the actor. "Sit in a full theatre and you will thinke you see so many lines drawn from the circumference of so many eares, whiles the actor is the center" (Overbury 1614, 209). In 1623, Ben Jonson labeled Shakespeare "the wonder of the stage" (Jonson 1623, Sig. A4). But of all the celebrated actors of the early modern stage, no one captured the public's wonder as overwhelmingly as the early extempore clown, Richard Tarlton. He was "the wonder of his time," according to the chronicler John Stowe, who in Henry-like fashion affirmed the potency of the public's wonder through repeated emphasis: "for a *wondrous* plentifull pleasant extemporall wit, hee was the *wonder* of his time" (Stowe 1615, 697; emphasis mine). He was a fixture of both the stage and the bookstalls, celebrated chiefly for his extemporal wit, but also as a musician, dancer, Master of Fence, and the author of a popular, but now lost, play, *The Seven Deadly Sins*. In 1583, he became one of the founding members of the Queen's Men playing company, with whom he remained until his death in 1588, and numerous publications counted him as both a royal and popular favorite; as the playwright and pamphleteer Thomas Heywood noted, he was "in his time, gratious with the queene, his soveraigne, and in the people's general applause" (Heywood 1612, Sig. E2). Tarlton was, according to Andrew Gurr, "the first to become a national figure, and most significantly his fame was equally potent at court, in the playhouse and in provincial towns" (Gurr 2004, 151). So pervasive and potent was Tarlton's fame that it often proves an obstacle into serious biographical inquiry, as the general clamor for enhanced access to Tarlton opened up profitable pathways for the appropriation of his name and image. As the entry for Tarlton in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*) laments, "any attempt to reconstruct Tarlton's life is bedeviled by contradiction, partly because no other Elizabethan actor was so much spoken and written about" and also because "printers made use […] of his name in the effort to increase sales, and this makes it difficult to determine what Tarlton actually wrote" (Thomson 2011).

While the obstacles of public fascination and appropriation might easily be recognized today as near-requisite components of the phenomenon of celebrity, scholars remain loath to label Tarlton, and other pre-Enlightenment figures more generally, a celebrity. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody instead deem

Tarlton, and specifically his assignation as a wonder, as an "embryonic" forebear to the concept of celebrity, especially given wonder's supernatural connotations of "miraculous gifts and power" (Luckhurst and Moody 2005, 4); however, they overlook the term's early modern multivalence, and thereby its significance in the history of celebrity, including the less grandiose meaning Lilti cites as the core of celebrity and that Shakespeare employed in *Henry IV, Part I*: "to feel [...] curiosity" and "to be desirous to know or learn" (*OED s.v.* wonder, v.2). Stephen Greenblatt has further unraveled the complexities of early modern wonder in *Marvelous Possessions*:

> Wonder – thrilling, potentially dangerous, momentarily immobilizing, charged at once with desire, ignorance and fear [...] an instinctive recognition of difference, the sign of heightened attention. The expression of wonder stands for all that cannot be understood, that can scarcely be believed. It calls attention to the problem of credibility and at the same time insists upon the undeniability, the exigency of the experience. (Greenblatt 1991, 20)

Wonder was also, according to Greenblatt, "yoked to possession" in its "unappeasable desire" (xi). In its vast array of affective and economic properties, *wonder* stood in for much of what celebrity now encapsulates: it aroused passions, desires, and curiosity; it was urgent; it appeared as both apparent and unknowable; it elicited possessive, consumptive impulses that could never be fully satiated. And while Greenblatt's focus is the wonder generated in New World encounters, the term was strongly linked to the theater as well. In 1640, the poet Leonard Digges, for example, described Shakespeare's audiences as "ravished! With what wonder they went hence!" (quoted in Gurr 1987, 240).

In this essay, I explore what it meant for Tarlton to be labeled "the wonder of his time" – that is, not just to arouse the public's wonder, but to embody it, to be a human wonder. The wonder Stowe attributed to Tarlton, I argue, speaks to a nascent celebrity culture in early modern London that flourished on the city's stages and pages, generating a complex matrix of affective, social, and economic dynamics that promoted Tarlton and other popular players to heights of prominence and influence previously reserved for men of birthright. To this end, I move here through three gradually expansive sites of wonder in early modern London, from the theater to the circulation of theatrically inspired discourse to early modern market relations. These concentric circles of celebrity production and consumption also correspond to the three primary components often cited as constituent of the phenomenon of celebrity: identification, dissemination, and commoditization. As the wonder of his time, Tarlton provides a particularly illuminating case study in the dynamics of early modern theatrical celebrity, fulfilling the putative parameters of the phenomenon established in a diverse body of historical and theoretical scholarship, and revealing a robust culture of celebrity in an era almost unanimously cited only as its generative predecessor.

In 2011, Simon Morgan issued a call for more expansive historical explorations of celebrity, arguing that through "the insights of modern celebrity theory," we can "identify particular historical moments" outside of modernity in which "an identifiable celebrity culture existed" (Morgan 2011, 95). Here, I offer what I maintain is one such "identifiable celebrity culture" in early modern London, particularly through the decades in which the theater most vigorously flourished from about 1580-1630, and one particularly embodied in its first breakthrough star. While Tarlton offers an especially salient demonstration of the dynamics of early modern theatrical celebrity, he was by no means the only player of the era to arouse his public's wonder or participate in these kinds of social, market, and affective exchanges with his public. Shakespeare, the tragedians Edward Alleyn and Richard Burbage, and a host of others likewise achieved remarkable celebrity in their lifetimes, and the means by which the public consumed their products and identified with them offers significant insight into the shifting cultural landscape of early modern England and the theater's pivotal role in the process. In turn, an examination of the dynamics of early modern theatrical celebrity likewise opens up a broader spectrum of historical moments and cultural practices to critical consideration within the field of celebrity studies.

2. The Wonder of the Theater

Given the robust trade in what Michael Bristol has termed the "living commodities" of the early modern English theater's famous players (Bristol 1994, 28), there is surprisingly little overlap between the disparate critical conversations of early modern theatrical culture and modern celebrity theory. A handful of such dialogues exist: Alexandra Halasz has explored the commercial aspects of Tarlton's fame, especially in posthumous circulation (Halasz 1995); S.P. Cerasano has examined Alleyn's remarkable and marketable fame (Cerasano 2005); and Louise Geddes has explored the celebrity of early modern stage clowns (Geddes 2015). But such treatments generally fail to make use of the insights offered in contemporary celebrity theory, while celebrity studies, in turn, generally regard the early modern period as a productive forebear of the later development of celebrity. Ulinka Rublack, for example, has argued that the era prepared "the ground for an emotional investment in famous people of diverse distinction" (Rublack 2011, 402).

Celebrity theory, however, has much to offer early modern theatrical studies, including new ways of thinking about what Rublack calls the "emotional investment" people make in public persons. As Rublack explains, one of the chief interests of celebrity studies is to "explore the imagined relationship audiences establish as consumers of celebrity figures" (Rublack 2011, 399), and, as Robert van Krieken has noted, the ways in which "celebrity personali-

ties can be an important vehicle in the constitution of the self" (van Krieken 2012, 95; see also the introduction of this issue: van Krieken and Vinovrški 2019, 7-17). Given the expansive scope of the celebrity's dissemination and commoditization, perhaps its most central dynamics lie in the remarkably personal arena of identification and the processes through which audiences engage in the complex processes of projecting, investing, and creating their sense of self in celebrities with whom they imagine they share strong bonds. The theater provides an ideal site for the establishment of such identificatory bonds between celebrities and their publics in both the intimacy and intensity of the theatrical event, where the real-time confrontations of flesh and flesh in the highly charged immediacy of performance forge momentary, but nonetheless powerful, bonds amongst audiences and actors.

As T.G. Bishop has argued, such complex dynamics are a function of the wonder of the theater:

> Wonder is an especially potent gift in the theatre's pharmacopoeia for the very reason that it foregrounds the difficulty [...] of distinguishing a subject and an object of perception. In that labile moment, the intimate interrelations of emotion and reason are explored, and wonder becomes a kind of high-level 'switchpoint' for transactions between emotional and rational responses. (Bishop 1996, 4)

In Bishop's formulation, theatrical wonder occupies a liminal space between cognitive and affective processes, not unlike Greenblatt's assessment of wonder's position between "all that cannot be understood" and "undeniability." According to Bishop, wonder is a phenomenon that even obscures the boundaries between the looker and the looked upon, the self and other selfs, potentially facilitating an intimacy of communion and shared identificatory processes through its utter indecipherability. Fittingly, Bishop has argued that theatrical wonder "begins with the actors who inhabit and enliven the play's 'parts' and who actively adjust the fit between self and role moment by moment" (Bishop 1991, 170).

However, as Gary C. Woodward has argued, "Identification thrives on first impressions and limited knowledge" (Woodward 2003, 69), as prolonged interaction and true intimacy inevitably reveal the divisive gulfs that separate other as other. It is precisely for this reason that Woodward has surmised that the unstable and transient domain of the celebrity provides such an apt vessel of self-identification (Woodward 2003, 69), as the relationships between publics and their stars never achieve the fruition of genuine interpersonal engagement. In other words, celebrity identification emerges in the liminal space of wonder – between knowing and not knowing, or as aforementioned, in Inglis's dialectic of "knowability and distance." Henry IV's treatise on wonder and publicity likewise continues its instructions by noting that,

> Being daily swallowed by men's eyes,
> They surfeited with honey and began

> To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
> More than a little is by much too much. (3.2.70-3)

As Henry explains, his own strategy of premeditated public scarcity is designed specifically to prevent overfamiliarity, through which his public, saturated with his presence, would cease to wonder at him. Such tensions of wonder that facilitate personal identification are frequently cited in studies of celebrity: Chris Rojek argued that "celebrities seem, simultaneously, both larger than life and intimate confrères" (Rojek 2001, 16-7); Richard Schickel deemed celebrities "intimate strangers" (Schickel 1985); and Joseph Roach labeled the core of the relationship between the public and its celebrities as "public intimacy," in which the tension between stars' "widespread visibility and their actual remoteness" produces an unfulfillable desire that perpetuates consumption (Roach 2005, 16).

As one of the early modern theater's first extemporal clowns, Tarlton was especially poised to capture his audience's wonder, and thus, facilitate the identificatory mechanisms that operate through wonder's antipodal tensions. Tarlton's theater, like all theater, was a highly charged and immediate event that demanded heightened audience attention and participation, as live theater is always a fluid, mutable experience grounded in its present moment and unrecoverable upon its close. But the sheer newness of Tarlton's enterprise in the 1580s likely rendered his craft as especially unpredictable. Considering that the first standing theater, appropriately named The Theatre, was established in 1576, Tarlton's arts were strikingly, as Henry notes of his own presence, "fresh and new," thus thwarting the overfamiliarity that dissolves identificatory bonds even as his regular presence on the stage spurred a sense of acquaintance. Tarlton's particular skills as an extemporizer, however, perfectly positioned him amidst the competing tensions of accessibility and distance that foster celebrity identification. Improvisation, perhaps more than other types of performance, requires a sustained state of alertness both to and from the audience and, arguably, a more perceptible dialogic exchange between player and playgoer; improvisation also obfuscates the borders of performance, carving out a space of interaction that resides somewhere between player and part, audience and actor, and scripted oratory and spontaneous conversation.

While Tarlton performed scripted roles in popular plays, such as the part of Dericke in the anonymously authored *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, Tarlton was chiefly celebrated for his post-play jigs, which included song, dance, and improvisational witticism. One regular feature of the early modern stage that Tarlton was especially well known for was backchat, in which the clown appeared to step out of character to taunt or retort to audience members. As Gurr explained,

> playgoers could engage in this kind of comedy, with its extra-dramatic tactics of direct address to the audience with the clown speaking out of character or [...] claiming not to be a clown. It depends largely on the audience knowing

> Tarlton as himself, and his special act after the play when he versified extempore on subjects given him by the audience. This familiar practice of backchat might easily spill into the play itself, [and] give some sense of the intimate kinship which existed between players and audience. (Gurr 1987, 155)

Gurr's description of Tarlton's practice of backchat points to one of the key mechanisms through which audiences identify with celebrities in the establishment of seemingly intimate relations. According to Gurr, the intimacy he ascribes to the player-audience relationship was dependent upon the playgoers knowing Tarlton *as himself*, thus offering audiences the enticing opportunity to peer behind the veil of player-as-character in order to interact with the person, Richard Tarlton, who plays. But by Gurr's admission, the intimate interaction of backchat shared a blurry boundary with scripted performance, tempering the affective bonds between audience and actor *as himself* with the concealment of character and creating a ceaseless push-and-pull between accessibility and distance central to celebrity allure.

As Roach, Schickel, and others have attested, the intimacy a public feels for its celebrities is always illusory, yet gripping enough to promote identification. Though Schickel isolated these tensions squarely within the technology of film, and Inglis within the media outlets of the 18th century and beyond, the same dialectic holds true of theatrical exchange, as the intimate exchanges initiated in the theater are always mitigated by an inverse interaction of estrangement; that is, the relationship between playgoer and player involves a paradoxical dialectic of distance and accessibility by which the rituals of intimate contact are subverted by overt acts of concealment, as these antipodal tensions spur mutual desire and sustain the dynamic relations between public and celebrity performer.

If we equate intimacy, as does psychologist Joel B. Bennett, with a mutual exchange of "self-disclosure, vulnerability, or sexuality" (Bennett 2000, xiv), then the reciprocal vulnerability of audience and actor in the theater provides fertile ground for the development of intimate relations, or at least the semblance of them, and Tarlton's backchat, in which he aimed his witticisms directly at his audience while he took center stage alone, would seem an especially intimate exchange. Unlike a film actor, a stage actor occupies a notably vulnerable position, with his live body exposed before the critical gazes of multiple spectators, unmediated by prescriptive camera angles and editing. "Put simply," wrote Luckhurst and Moody, "the celebrity of performers is about the experience of seeing an actor in the flesh" (Luckhurst and Moody 2005, 3), and the actor's body, like costumes and props, becomes part of the spectacle and invites audience response. The English poet Henry Peacham, for example, reported that Tarlton's supposedly unattractive appearance often provoked audience laughter before the actor even stepped foot on stage:

Tarlton when his head was onely seene,
The Tire-house dore and Tapistrie betweene,
Set all the multitude in such a laughter,
They could not hold for scarse an houre after. (quoted in Nunzeger 1929, 363)

The 16th-century pamphleteer Thomas Nashe reported a similar audience reaction to Tarlton in his *Pierce Penilesse*: "the people began exceedingly to laugh, when Tarlton first peept out his head" (Nashe 1592, 36). That a Justice reportedly beat the laughing audience members with a staff for "presum[ing] to laugh at the Queenes men" indicated that such spontaneous eruptions at the sight of Tarlton were not solicited through performance (Nashe 1592, 36); they appear to have been laughing upon the mere glimpse of his face, which may explain why, for Peacham, Tarlton became a symbol of exposure and vulnerability. In his epistle to his 1608 collection of epigrams, Peacham anticipated his readers' response and lamented that, "like Tarleton, I see once again I must thrust my head out of doores to be laughed at, and venture a hissing amongst you" (Peacham 1608, Sig. A3r). The reference not only positions Tarlton as emblematic of the vulnerability of public scrutiny, but also strongly attests to the identificatory bonds such vulnerability can provoke, as he appropriated Tarlton's experience as a way to make sense of his own.

As intimacy hinges on reciprocal vulnerability, in the theater, the bodies of playgoers, too, are exposed and vulnerable, subject to the return gaze of performers, their responses not only discernible but frequently and publicly criticized. Like actors, early modern spectators' behavior was partially prescribed, by convention rather than script, and audiences regularly shouted, clapped, stood, and hissed throughout performances. But audiences were frequently held in contempt for their behavior, and Gurr has counted at least 34 complaints by dramatists regarding playgoer response (Gurr 1992, 227). Entwined in the mutual vulnerability of external assessment, the intimacy between audience and actor was further enhanced by the intensely personal nature of their mutual disclosures. Audiences responded to performance through affective displays of joy and sadness, and such responses were indicative of the decidedly intimate nature of experience and affect depicted on stage. On stage, the early modern player enacted moments of betrayal, lust, heartbreak, anxiety, reconciliation, mourning, love, and death – often, as a number of contemporary references have suggested, rather convincingly represented. Overbury's "An Excellent Actor," for example, noted, "what we see him personate, we think truly done before us" (Overbury 1614, 210). As any audience's capacity to respond empathetically rests, at least in part, on the actors' convincing representation of human conflict and emotion, the credibility Overbury assigned the actor's performance certainly aided in facilitating the intimate exchanges of the theater; however, those same dynamics were precisely what simultaneously facilitated the inverse theatrical interaction of estrangement.

Of Overbury's choice of term to distinguish successful playing, Peter Thomson has argued, "'Personation,' which proposes that one whole human being (Hamlet, say) can be represented by another whole human being (Burbage), was an Elizabethan development" (Thomson 1994, 329). This turn toward embodied, illusionistic performance, Thomson further argued, more profoundly obscured the boundaries between character and actor in the early modern period (Thomson 1994, 333), in that, with actors thinking, speaking, dressing, and moving as dramatic characters, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish one from the other; the two became irretrievably intertwined in one being. While the enmeshed relationship between actor and character in personated performance may have allowed for a more deeply resonant audience experience, in that playgoers could more readily recognize the conflicts on stage as congruous to their own, the blurry line between character and actor inherent in the process likewise distanced playgoer from player, perpetually concealing the distinction between the actor *as himself* and the character he assumed. Thomson has argued that the famous clowns did not personate, but rather always remained themselves on stage and were, in fact, "loved for it" (Thomson 1994, 334), but certainly, even in his extemporal capacities, the jigging, rhyming Tarlton appeared in the prescribed habit of the stage clown, engaging the audience with a mix of quick wit and studied performance. In 1590, Roger Williams observed that, "our pleasant Tarleton would counterfeite many artes, but he was no bodie out of his mirths" (quoted in Nunzeger 1929, 356); his use of the word "counterfeite" suggests that he recognized Tarlton's stage appearances as theatrical performances, as he further indicated that the actor's offstage presence may have been somewhat less dazzling than his onstage persona.

Though personation was a concept generally reserved for tragedians, the clown's subtle embodiment of persona may have provided the blurriest of all distinctions between actor and role, rendering his performance so convincingly authentic that he seemed not to act at all, but rather, to appear *as himself*. The word *personation*, though frequently invoked to denote the credibility of performance, circulated just as frequently as a marker of fraudulence or counterfeiting; to personate was to simultaneously make credible and to conceal, occupying the liminal spaces of theatrical wonder and invoking the dynamics of intimacy and estrangement at the root of celebrity. The stagecraft that permitted mutual vulnerability and the audience's empathetic response also prevented the actor's reciprocal self-disclosure as, onstage, he was neither entirely himself nor entirely a dramatic fabrication, but rather, an unrecoverable amalgam of each. Many accounts further indicate that the indistinguishable boundaries of personation extended outside the theater as well. As John Earle observed of the player in his 1628 *Microcosmographie*:

> He is like our painting Gentle-women, seldome in his owne face, seldomer in his cloathes […] Hee do's not only personate on the Stage, but sometime in the Street, for hee is mask'd still in the habite of a Gentleman – His parts find

him oaths and good words, which he keepes for his use and discourse, and makes shew with them of a fashionable Companion. (Earle 1628, Sigs. E3r-E4)

In Earle's assessment, the fuzzy line between player and part was further obscured in its placelessness; personation, including costume and scripted oratory, was not relegated to the stage, but a fluid performance that permeated even material boundaries. Thus, both on and off the stage, the early modern player participated in a complex set of interactions with his public that established his popular presence: he was at once both intimately accessible, yet concealed behind an ever-present shroud of performance through his participation in a new and immediate cultural development, where his theatricality knew no bounds.

3. The Theater as Social Medium/Media

Earle's observations about the permeable borders of the theater speak as much to the mystifying nature of this new entity, the professional player, as it does to the disseminating reach of theatrical enterprise. However, one of the central reasons behind early modern England's omission from the critical record of celebrity studies lies with a perceived lack in the requisite modes of dissemination, particularly through mass media, whether in the newspapers and magazines of the 18th century or the film and television of the twentieth. Luckhurst and Moody, for example, have argued that "celebrity is above all a media production" and that "only in the 18th century does an extensive apparatus for disseminating fame emerge" (Luckhurst and Moody 2005, 3); Daniel Boorstin deemed celebrity the byproduct of the "Graphic Revolution" (Boorstin 1961); and Rojek posited "mass-media representation [as] the key principle in the formation of celebrity" (Rojek 2001, 13). Perhaps cultural and film historian Neal Gabler summed up these arguments most succinctly: "No media, no celebrity" (Gabler 2009). But media in such accounts has generally been rather narrowly defined by unidirectional outlets, ignoring what Rublack has labeled the "unstable and possibly contradictory processes" through which celebrity may have proliferated in historical periods before the establishment of such media (Rublack 2011, 400). We need only look to our current frontiers of online and social media and its rising stars as a demonstration of celebrity's capacity to adapt to, and to thrive in, disparate medial environments. And in many ways, the central, public forum of the early modern theater with its highly participatory environment and cross-platform spread of influence provided Londoners with a form of media more closely aligned to 2.0 networks than to traditional celebrity forums.

In the marginalia of Stowe's 1615 *Annales*, in which he labeled Tarlton "the wonder of his time," a note added, "Tarlton so beloved that men use his picture

for their signs" (Stowe 1615, 697). Halasz has convincingly argued that these signs likely refer to tavern signs (Halasz 1995), and thus demonstrate multiple processes of celebrity at once: the manner by which members of the public identified with and through Tarlton by wielding his image in self-signification, Tarlton's commoditization through commercial appropriation, and the expansive reach of Tarlton's dissemination beyond the theater throughout London. The employment of his image on tavern signs also speaks to the highly collaborative, social nature of Tarlton's celebrity, which emerged in the participatory environment of the theater and expanded through countless acts of public co-authorship in casual conversations, popular print, and, indeed, on tavern signs dotting the city's streets. As Woodward has noted of celebrity identification, "stars represent unfinished narratives" (Woodward 2003, 69), and thus, the public's necessarily limited knowledge, or distance from the celebrity, invites self-identification. The incomplete nature of celebrity narrative likewise fuels the unquenchable desire to know more and the impulse to fill in those narrative gaps and thus claim shared authorial responsibility in the co-created celebrity sign. In the case of Tarlton and other early modern theatrical celebrities, this co-authorship began in the highly social, vitally central medium of the theater, through the active dialogic exchanges amongst players and playgoers.

The late 16th-century theater was remarkably different both structurally and socially from our current theatrical institutions. Far from a highbrow affair, the early modern theater attracted a wide spectrum of social groups and was frequently subject to criticism and authoritative intervention for the content of the plays staged there as well as audience unruliness. The public theaters that dotted the south bank of the Thames – as opposed to the private halls and court performances, which attracted far more elite audiences – were open-air amphitheaters, with all plays performed in daylight; coupled with their octagonal designs, the universal lighting of the theater meant that audiences were just as much on display as the actions on stage and that the capacity for audience interaction was greatly enhanced, both amongst themselves and with the on-stage players surrounded by playgoers on three sides. Further, gallants' stools situated on the actual stage and a lords' room above it ensured not only high visibility for these select patrons, but a greater degree of dialogue between player and playgoer, and the playhouses' repertory practices meant that audiences could easily become familiar with the actors who appeared repeatedly throughout the week in different roles. Given the theaters' capacity to seat approximately 2,500 spectators, playhouses provided Londoners a mass, social forum, and Gurr has estimated that between 15,000 to 25,000 people attended plays each week, for about one million theater visits per year (Gurr 1992, 212-3). Considering that the entire population of London in 1600 was 200,000 (Merritt 2001, 1; figures derived from Stowe's Survey of London, first published in 1598), those figures likely encompassed a substantial swath of all Londoners.

Unsurprisingly, considering the number of people that regularly congregated there, the theater became a locus of communal activity, a site to see and be seen, and to share news and gossip. The plays performed there banked on the presumption of audience familiarity not only with current events but with other theatrical productions, to which numerous contemporary references and in-jokes and a great deal of self-referentiality attest. As Jeremy Lopez has argued, the theater treated the audience as an in-the-know collective (Lopez 2002, 44), and a 1599 Swiss tourist once noted of his travels in London,

> the English pass their time, learning at the play what is happening abroad; indeed men and womenfolk visit such places without scruple, since the English for the most part do not travel much, but prefer to learn foreign matters and take their pleasures at home. (Platter 1599, 170)

Indeed, the plays performed upon the stages of theaters like the Globe, The Rose, The Swan, and others were but one form of discourse traded within those theaters' walls, as the decidedly social nature of this arena facilitated a trade in fashions, news, gossip, and interaction.

But as much antitheatricalist concern has demonstrated, the disseminating reach of theatrical conversations did not stay within the theater walls. The theater's presence resonated throughout London, and often beyond, in ways both distinctly tangible as well as ideological. Visibly, the city was awash in theatrically inspired print – from praise pieces to playbills plastered on posts to a massive increase in print-plays at the bookstalls.[1] Actors from the various playing companies paraded through the streets to "cry the play" before performance (Stern 2009, 36), and as the playhouses were some of the tallest structures along the Thames, their presence – even relegated, as they were, to the suburbs on the other side of the river – was always appreciable. More distressingly to both authorities and lay antitheatricals, however, was that the seemingly contained public of playgoers had the capacity to infect the public at large with the unsanctioned news and prerogatives generated within. In *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London*, Ian Munro has argued that,

> the theater audience demarcates the space of drama, but it also disperses it, circulating its images throughout the urban body. This disseminating power was coded by civic elements hostile to the theater as an appropriation of urban space, an illicit infiltration of London that corrupts and pollutes the symbolic landscape of the city with an illegitimate theatrical significance. (Munro 2005, 107)

Thus, the social medium of the theater provoked fears precisely because of its social and cultural functions, that the interactions within those octagonal walls were not contained therein, and that they possessed a troubling capacity to effect opinions and practices in the city as a whole.

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[1] While 15 plays were printed in London during the 1580s, 124 plays were released in print in the first decade of the 17th century (Egan 2006, 94).

In many ways, the 16th- and 17th-century London theater functioned not only as a social medium but as an early, analogue form of social media, facilitating the twin features that Jim Macnamara and Ansgar Zerfass have argued most centrally characterize social media: the "openness for participation and interactivity involving dialogue, conversation, collaboration, and co-creativity" and dispersed authorial control, as opposed to the "one-way, top-down information distribution models" that characterize broadcast media (Macnamara and Zerfass 2012, 293). While grounded in script, live theater is always, like social media, a collaborative process, informed and amended in the moment through reciprocal response, but the particular dynamics of early modern theater, free from the spatial barriers of proscenium arches and darkened auditoriums and the conventions of passive, obeisant spectatorship, were likely much more so. With playgoers equally on display, their presence held greater relevance, with their affective responses and consumptive practices actively determining the longevity of any play's run and any player's value, with their extra-dramatic activities – their sharing of news and fashions, for example – proving so potent as to warrant concern and intervention.

To add to Macnamara and Zerfass's criteria, the theater, like online social media, possessed these participatory capacities in real time during the theatrical event and facilitated the spread of information to other platforms – namely, a print market that operated under no legal directive to credit or compensate authors, thereby dispersing narrative control to the literate public. The extant remains of the adjacent market of theatrically inspired print paint a particularly instructive picture of one of the more profound developments to emerge from the social media of the early modern theater: namely, the proliferation of theatrical celebrities through its pages. Cerasano has observed that, beginning in the late 16th-century, a remarkable shift occurred in what was an already traditional format; as she has noted, "few *living* individuals of any sort were memorialized in praise poetry before 1590" (Cerasano 2005, 53), yet in the century's final decade, contemporaries of all sorts – including aristocrats, poets, and actors – emerged as subjects of commendatory verse, with actors increasingly becoming one of the more frequent subjects of such poems. This shift testifies to the perceived contemporaneity of the theater, but it likewise points to its wide range of influence, in that actors were being promulgated for their virtues alongside the form's more conventional, heroic subjects.

Interestingly, a great number of both prose treatments and poems acknowledged a kind of self-conscious responsibility to commit these men's names to print and accept a collaborative role in the construction of celebrity presence. Many of these pieces likewise pointed to the ephemerality of a player's trade, that while he was celebrated communally through a social forum, his fame was unanchored to any material form that might preserve it. For example, Heywood wrote, "among so many dead, let me not forget one yet alive, in his time most worthy, famous Maister Edward Allen" (Heywood 1612, Sig. E2). As he taxed

himself with the responsibility not to forget, he aligned the contemporary tragedian to a history of heroes while carefully pointing out both Alleyn's intangible fame as it had circulated through the public and his immediate relevance "in his time." Similarly, Jonson singled out Alleyn as representative of the present, when he praised his "present worth" in his 1616 "To Edward Alleyn" and asked, "How can so great example dye in me,/ That ALLEN, I should pause to publish thee?" (Jonson 1616, lines 11, 7-8). Once again, the poet has assumed responsibility for a cross-platform collaboration in the establishment of Alleyn's fame.

Of course, not all theatrically inspired print was necessarily positive in its portrayals of celebrities, and many references to theatrical celebrities – not unlike today's celebrity media – opted instead to assert the base humanity of their subjects rather than lift them up in praise. The London poet John Taylor, for example, published a series of mildly humiliating anecdotes involving famous actors in two different collections (Taylor 1629, 1638), one of which particularly illustrated how widely these theatrical celebrities were known:

> Master Field the Player riding up Fleetstreet a great pace, a Gentleman called him, and asked him what Play was played that day. Hee (being angry to be stayd upon so frivolous a demand) answered, that he might see what Play was to be playd upon every Poste. I cry you mercy (said the Gentleman) I tooke you for a Poste, you road so fast. (Taylor 1629, Sig. B7)

The anecdote not only established the tragedian Nathan Field as a recognizable celebrity who was interrupted and irritated by the demands of his public, but with playbills affixed "upon every Poste," also pointed to one of the means by which celebrities rose to prominence, with the theater's presence splashed across the London landscape in print.

As aforementioned, no actor of the era was as widely written or spoken about as Tarlton, and fittingly, as the wonder of his time, the vast array of extant print references does little to demystify his life and craft, even while painting an undeniable portrait of his massive appeal and rapt audience. As Greenblatt theorized, wonder both illuminates "the problem of credibility" while it simultaneously "insists upon the undeniability, the exigency of experience," and print accounts of Tarlton demonstrate, if not a credible record of man's career, a quite legible demonstration of the intense curiosities and desires that compelled his audience's persistent speculation, fabrication, tribute, and derision. Tarlton's name appeared in print at least three times, though somewhat questionably, as a reporter of news – of floods, snow, and an earthquake, respectively – as well as in ballads and collections of anecdotes, and his name would continue to proliferate in print treatments for at least a century after his death, often in the same spirit as praise poetry for living actors – that is, in a bid to cement in writing what was his transient passage on the stage. The diarist John Manningham and the aforementioned Taylor, for example, recorded some of Tarlton's specific jokes (Manningham 1603; Taylor 1629); others, like

Peacham, wrote detailed descriptions of his performances (Peacham 1638); many eulogized, and others overtly fictionalized, including several reported encounters with Tarlton's ghost. Tarlton's celebrity was even sufficient enough to spawn its own verb form: the English scholar and writer Gabriel Harvey referred to extemporizing as "Tarletonising" in a 1592 pamphlet (Harvey 1592, 19). The most popular account of his life was undoubtedly *Tarlton's Jests* (1613), a collection of anecdotes and witticisms composed in parts over the course of more than two decades following his death and reprinted in multiple editions. As Thomson's *ONDB* entry notes, due to the jestbook's pervasive influence on Tarlton's posthumous circulation, "the historical Tarlton can no longer be distinguished from [its] hero" (Thomson 2011), and while the ready intermingling of credible with highly dubious anecdotes compiled here may further obscure the historical Tarlton from critical observation, they do offer a provocative glimpse into the wonder that sustained the collaborative construction and longevity of the text. Each of these disparate accounts demonstrate the co-authorial status Tarlton and his public shared in the establishment of his celebrity and further testify to the disseminating reach of theatrical wonder.

4. Commodity, Credit, and Artificial Persons

As noted by Greenblatt, the wonder that compelled the dissemination and dispersal of Tarlton's celebrity narrative also provokes a desire of possession, a consumptive impulse not only to co-author, but to own. As much as the diverse print record of Tarlton's enormous appeal testifies to public curiosity, it also registers his commoditization in the London market and the commercial trade in and appropriation of his name, narrative, and image. A little-known 1590 play called *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (Wilson 1590) theatricalizes the process of Tarlton's commoditization in the early modern market when a ballad-seller appeared on stage to entice his would-be customers to buy a picture of the recently deceased Tarlton. "This is Tarlton's picture," the ballad-seller informs his potential buyers (Wilson 1590, 266), and a number of critics have speculated that the picture he held out before audiences was likely one available for sale outside the theater (Astington 1997; Munro 2009), instructively pointing to the circulation of celebrity name and image engendered within. Further, the on-stage ballad-seller's sales pitch may offer some insight into the lure of such items, as he informs his targets that "if thou knewest not him, thou knewest no body" (Wilson 1590, 267). In this exchange, the ballad-seller cunningly equates their consumption of the image to an elevation in their own worth, as he offers the image as a commodity that would proclaim their own cultural savvy and participation within a community of the initiated. To buy Tarlton's image, in this exchange, is to know him; to know Tarlton, the ballad-seller instructs, is to be somebody.

The dynamics of this exchange point not only to Tarlton's commoditization in the market both on and off the stage, but also to the means by which celebrity consumption is a site of intertwined economic and identificatory investment. For as much as the compulsion to purchase and possess some portion of the celebrity via material artifact speaks to the desire to know the celebrity and satiate the curiosity unfulfilled narratives arouse, commodity consumption can also operate as a bid for self-understanding, an attempt to supply the missing strands of one's own narrative as well as the celebrity's. In this way, the celebrity marketplace functions as yet another site of wonder, another space marked by its in-betweenness, suspended in the tensions between the subject and object of desire and between the production and consumption of celebrity. Taken together, the commercial trade in celebrities proves remarkably symbiotic, as the public makes both a commercial and an affective investment in its celebrities, and as with any investment, expects returns – whether through the celebrity's potential to designate personal value, satiate a hunger for intimacy, or provide a more stable sense of identity.

For early modern Londoners, this complex matrix of celebrity consumption-production may have held special resonance, given the emerging economic and social relations of the proto-capitalist market. As the epicenter of increasingly expansive, concentric circles of celebrity, the early modern theater, according to Jean-Christophe Agnew in *Worlds Apart*, provided "a laboratory of and for the new social relations" (Agnew 1986, xi): a space in which audience and actor united in mutual explorations of social identity amidst new economic realities. Agnew's work proves invaluable in the study of early modern theatrical celebrity, as it demonstrates the highly enmeshed relationship between the theater and the market – twin institutions that facilitated the emergence and perpetuation of celebrity as a cultural form in both the actor's staged performances and his circulation through commodities exchange. According to Agnew, the dialectic of "familiarity and distance" so often cited in discussions of both wonder and celebrity became "joined in a way that reproduced the new sensibility of commodity exchange" (Agnew 1986, 109) on the early modern stage, reflecting upon the simultaneous ubiquity and mysterious concealments of the marketplace. The theater, and particularly its celebrity players, offered Londoners a highly visible means of negotiating the complexities of the early modern market economy.

One way that players could potentially demystify emerging market forces was through emblematizing their era's enhanced social mobility. Lawrence Stone and others have demonstrated how wealth and material accumulation played an increasingly important role in social status during the period (Stone 1966), and early theatrical celebrities like Tarlton may have appeared to embody such mobility in their social and economic ascensions and declines. The player's "extraordinary plasticity offered a living lesson in the mechanics of social mobility and assimilation," Agnew wrote; "the social talents of the play-

er earned him a living, if not, as in Shakespeare's case, the insignia of a gentleman" (Agnew 1986, 122). Players provided not only an inspirational exemplar, but a substantial means of participation in the process as well; by investing their resources in a highly visible, fluid commodity, the consumer-producers of celebrity could, in very real ways, negotiate and determine the status of public figures, whose rises and falls would then reflect back unto the investors. As collaborators in the construction of celebrity, the public became complicit in the allocation of social status, and celebrity may have provided a vehicle for the negotiation of such social forces. As a living commodity, the celebrity can magnify the otherwise abstract conditions of quotidian capitalist consumerism, or as Rojek puts it, "humanize the process of commodity consumption" (Rojek 2001, 14), assigning a human face to the ebb and flow of market demand and providing a collective forum for the negotiation of market exchange and its social implications.

The emergent celebrities of early modern London may have likewise provided a particularly potent symbol of the increasingly pervasive credit culture that governed nearly all market exchanges. As in a celebrity culture, the culture of credit likewise commoditized individuals by assigning them both commercial and affective value, and the parallels between credit and celebrity are further apparent in the sometimes tenuous attachment between person and credit; in fact, in many ways, credit, like celebrity, functioned as a publicly negotiated and traded name over which an individual wielded only partial control. As Craig Muldrew demonstrated in *The Economy of Obligation*, an increase in commodity exchange in early modern England, coupled with a shortage of currency, created a transaction pattern in which "almost all buying and selling involved credit of one form of another" (Muldrew 1998, 95). Though transactions involving credit and debt had existed for at least a thousand years and were a commonplace of the medieval market, extant bills, bonds, and wills illustrate an overwhelming expansion of the practice in the 16th and 17th centuries to the extent that

> every household in the country, from those of paupers to the royal household, was to some degree enmeshed with the increasingly complicated webs of credit and obligation with which transactions were communicated. (Muldrew 1998, 95)

As Muldrew has argued, credit then took on a somewhat equalizing function in society because of the universal reliance upon it (Muldrew 1998, 124), and with such emphasis placed on credit, the term took on a host of meanings ranging from trustworthiness, favorable esteem, and honor to "trust or confidence in a buyer's ability and intention to pay at some future time" (*OED s.v.* credit, n. II, 9a).

Like celebrity, one's credit signified a conflation of personal performance and public perception, and celebrities provided an apt vessel for the negotiation of credit, with their own highly visible reputations and exchange values elevat-

ed to public display, hyperbolically mirroring the everyday social and economic realities of the public who consumed and co-produced them. The public's active trade in celebrity media and performance may have provided some sense of restored agency in the market concerns that governed their daily lives. To this end, Agnew posited his formulation of early modern "Artificial Persons," or the means by which individuals, compelled by the demands of a credit culture, adopted modes of theatricality to preserve their ability to participate in market affairs (Agnew 1986). The theater, in Agnew's model, proved both reflective and prescriptive, demonstrating

> how precarious social identity was, how vulnerable to unexpected disruptions and disclosure it was, and therefore how deeply theatrical it was. Everyone, dramatists seemed to say, was a player-king embroiled in a ceaseless struggle to preserve his legitimacy. (Agnew 1986, 112)

According to Agnew, the players that achieved the greatest prominence were also the most visibly fungible, adaptable to and representative of the unpredictable fluctuations of both the market and the theater. Echoing the ceaseless tensions that constitute theatrical wonder, Agnew argued of the player, "To become a luminary, he had first to become, in anthropological terms, a *liminary* – a transitional self permanently stationed at the threshold of otherhood" (Agnew 1986, 115). The liminary actor, he wrote, was "a figure situated 'betwixt and between' the conventional boundaries of social identity in early modern England" (Agnew 1986, 122).

Tarlton offers one example of both a luminary and a liminary. His status as a luminary star of the stage is indisputable; his popularity in the entwined institutions of the theater and the market attest to his widespread prominence. As the wonder of his time, he also occupied a liminal position that elided multiple divisions at once: between subject and object, credibility and astonishment, intimacy and estrangement, play and player, consumer and producer. His was a presence always precariously positioned in the "betwixt and between," and as such, he might be said to have particularly embodied the tensions of both theater and market, serving for his public as a corporeal manifestation of the changing social relations and enhanced social mobility in his contemporary London.

The iconic image of Tarlton with tabor and pipe that would feature so prominently for a century after his death – and the same one, presumably, used to decorate tavern signs and on display in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* – offers a potent example of Tarlton's liminary position. Depicted in the country homespun of a clown, his clothing, perhaps, signifies more than a character's apparel, but perpetually fixes Tarlton as the juxtaposition between his status by birthright and, as evidenced by the purse at his hip and by sheer virtue of his iconography, the enhanced position he achieved through the tools he carried. As such, he could demonstrate both the social ascent of the professional theatrical performer as well as the rise in economic status possible through the everyday theatrics required of a credit culture. As a theatrical ce-

lebrity, he offered his fellow Londoners a highly visible, accessible commodity whose consumption enfranchised the public to participate meaningfully in the economic forces that governed their daily lives and, perhaps, an inspirational exemplar of upward advancement. Though the precise conditions of his birth are not known, consensus maintains that Tarlton was lowly born, but died, as a Queen's Man, a member of the royal household and one of Elizabeth's favorites. Upon his death, he had achieved the clout to enlist the aid of royal advisor Sir Francis Walsingham to care for his six-year-old son (Gurr 1987, 153). His social ascension, due to his quick wit and performative acumen, resonates with the motto another actor, Shakespeare, famously coined for his purchased coat of arms: *Non sans droict*, or "not without merit." The merit, here, pointed to theatrical accomplishment as a legitimate means of acquiring heightened social status, and Tarlton appears to have been one of the earliest examples of such meritorious rises.

5. Conclusion

The iconic picture of Tarlton known to have graced the pages of popular print and thought to have hung outside taverns offers just one example of the flourishing of theatrical celebrity media in the early 17th century. As the London theaters grew ever more profound in their influence in the decades after Tarlton's 1588 death, so too proliferated the trade in theatrically inspired print and iconography. The early 17th century saw players' names, images, and narratives grow to even greater, more widespread prominence, with colorful anecdotes about players' off-stage lives for sale in pamphlets and ballads, just as playbills and advertorial title-pages of plays were plastered on posts throughout the city. Printed play-texts likewise began incorporating cast lists in their front pages, and audience accounts reported impassioned responses to players that often extended beyond the walls of the theater. "The eyes of all men are upon him," Earle observed of the player in his *Microcosmographie*. "The waiting-women spectators are over-eares in love with him, and Ladies send for him to act in their Chambers" (Earle 1628, Sigs. E3, E5). Tarlton's contemporaries Alleyn, Burbage, Shakespeare, and a host of others saw their names freely traded in the market outside of their personal control. Shakespeare actually lamented in sonnet form that "my name receives a brand" (Shakespeare, 111, line 5), as he noted his powerlessness to control both the circulation and signifying power of his publicly traded name. The clown Will Kempe, in an apparent bid to stem the flow of unauthorized narratives, published a public plea to "the impudent generation of Ballad-makers and their coherents" that they "not fill the country with lyes of his never done actes" (Kempe 1600, Sig. D3). Such print accounts strongly attest to the presence of what Morgan has termed "an identifiable celebrity culture" in early modern London, generat-

ed through the twin institutions of the theater and the market and the dynamics of affective and economic exchange engendered therein.

While I have argued here that the dynamics of the early modern theater, the print it inspired, and its relationship to a burgeoning market economy worked together to create a celebrity culture in 16th- and 17th-century London – encapsulated, as I believe, in the multivalent descriptor of *wonder* – I do not claim to offer a point of origin for the phenomenon of celebrity, nor do I subscribe to any sort of teleological narrative that would chronicle the history of celebrity through linear and increasingly expansive significance. In fact, given that all London playhouses were forced by ordinance to close in 1642, and that the Restoration gave rise to an entirely different theater both in terms of structure and the conventions of participation and performance, the dynamics of theatrical celebrity as practiced in the early 17th century were brought to a definitive halt, never to be identically resuscitated. What emerged in the 18th century with such theatrical luminaries as David Garrick operated through a decidedly new mode of celebrity circulation, and a more expansive sense of what constituted a public sphere, much more in line with the mass-media formulations traditionally offered as a prescriptive for celebrity culture. While there may indeed be observable points of overlap from one moment of celebrity to another, I agree with Rublack's assessment that "notions of celebrity are instances of fame" generated through "unstable and possibly contradictory processes" (Rublack 2011, 400), and I would argue that the particulars of early modern London's celebrity culture began and ended with the theater, just as I would argue that many other celebrity cultures have likely existed at different historical moments and through different means, without necessarily contributing to an overarching narrative. Celebrity is a potent, pervasive form that has proven capable of surviving ever-shifting cultural values, trends, and medial environments, and historical investigations into the celebrity trade freed from the restrictive parameters of chronological and medial boundaries offer provocative glimpses into the unrecoverable arenas of wonder and the popular imagination.

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